



## Timeline: Iraq

### A chronology of key events:

**1920** 25 April - Iraq is placed under British mandate.

**1921** 23 August - Faysal, son of Hussein Bin Ali, the Sharif of Mecca, is crowned Iraq's first king.

NAJAF  
Shrine of the Imam Ali, one of Shia Islam's holiest places

**1932** 3 October - Iraq becomes an independent state.

**1958** 14 July - The monarchy is overthrown in a military coup led by Brig Abd-al-Karim Qasim and Col Abd-al-Salam Muhammad Arif. Iraq is declared a republic and Qasim becomes prime minister.

**1963** 8 February - Qasim is ousted in a coup led by the Arab Socialist Baath Party (ASBP). Arif becomes president.

**1963** 18 November - The Baathist government is overthrown by Arif and a group of officers.

**1966** 17 April - After Arif is killed in a helicopter crash on 13 April, his elder brother, Maj-Gen Abd-al-Rahman Muhammad Arif, succeeds him as president.

**1968** 17 July - A Baathist led-coup ousts Arif and Gen Ahmad Hasan al-Bakr becomes president.

**1970** 11 March - The Revolution Command Council (RCC) and Mullah Mustafa Barzani, leader of the Kurdistan Democratic Party (KDP), sign a peace agreement.

**1972** - A 15-year Treaty of Friendship and Cooperation is signed between Iraq and the Soviet Union.

### Petroleum firm nationalised

**1972** - Iraq nationalises the Iraq Petroleum Company (IPC).

**1974** - In implementation of the 1970 agreement, Iraq grants limited autonomy to the Kurds but the KDP rejects it.

**1975** March - At a meeting of the Organisation of Petroleum Exporting Countries (Opec) in Algiers, Iraq and Iran sign a treaty ending their border disputes.

**1979** 16 July - President Al-Bakr resigns and is succeeded by Vice-President Saddam Hussein.

**1980** 1 April - The pro-Iranian Dawah Party claims responsibility for an attack on Deputy Prime Minister, Tariq Aziz, at Mustansiriyah University, Baghdad.

### Iran-Iraq war

**1980** 4 September - Iran shells Iraqi border towns (Iraq considers this as the start of the Iran/Iraq war).

#### IRAN-IRAQ WAR

Almost one million people died in the conflict; exchanges of war dead continued for years

**1980** 17 September - Iraq abrogates the 1975 treaty with Iran.

**1980** 22 September - Iraq attacks Iranian air bases.

**1980** 23 September - Iran bombs Iraqi military and economic targets.

**1981** 7 June - Israel attacks an Iraqi nuclear research centre at Tuwaythah near Baghdad.

#### Chemical attack on Kurds

**1988** 16 March - Iraq is said to have used chemical weapons against the Kurdish town of Halabjah.

**1988** 20 August - A ceasefire comes into effect to be monitored by the UN Iran-Iraq Military Observer Group (Uniimog).

**1990** 15 March - Farzad Bazoft, an Iranian-born journalist with London's Observer newspaper, accused of spying on a military installation, is hanged in Baghdad.

#### Iraq invades Kuwait

**1990** 2 August - Iraq invades Kuwait and is condemned by United Nations Security Council (UNSC) Resolution 660 which calls for full withdrawal.

**1990** 6 August - UNSC Resolution 661 imposes economic sanctions on Iraq.

**1990** 8 August - Iraq announces the merger of Iraq and Kuwait.

**1990** 29 November - UNSC Resolution 678 authorizes the states cooperating with Kuwait to use "all necessary means" to uphold UNSC Resolution 660.

**1991** 16 -17 January - The Gulf War starts when the coalition forces begin aerial bombing of Iraq ("Operation Desert Storm").

**1991** 13 February - US planes destroy an air raid shelter at Amiriyah in Baghdad, killing more than 300 people.

**1991** 24 February - The start of a ground operation which results in the liberation of Kuwait on 27 February.

#### Ceasefire

**1991** 3 March - Iraq accepts the terms of a ceasefire.

**1991** Mid-March/early April - Iraqi forces suppress rebellions in the south and the north of the country.

**1991** 8 April - A plan to establish a UN safe-haven in northern Iraq to protect the Kurds is approved at a European Union meeting. On 10 April the USA orders Iraq to end all military activity in this area.

**1992** 26 August - A no-fly zone, which Iraqi planes are not allowed to enter, is set up in southern Iraq, south of latitude 32 degrees north.

**1993** 27 June - US forces launch a cruise missile attack on Iraqi intelligence headquarters in Baghdad in retaliation for the attempted assassination of US President George Bush in Kuwait in April.

**1994** 29 May - Saddam Hussein becomes prime minister.

**1994** 10 November - Iraqi National Assembly recognises Kuwait's borders and its independence.

### **Oil-for-food**

**1995** 14 April - UNSC Resolution 986 allows the partial resumption of Iraq's oil exports to buy food and medicine ( the "oil-for-food programme"). It is not accepted by Iraq until May 1996 and is not implemented until December 1996.

**1995** August - Saddam Hussein's son-in-law, Gen Hussein Kamil Hasan al-Majid, his brother and their families leave Iraq and are granted asylum in Jordan.

**1995** 15 October - Saddam Hussein wins a referendum allowing him to remain president for another seven years.

**1996** 20 February - Hussein Kamil Hasan al-Majid and his brother, promised a pardon by Saddam Hussein, return to Baghdad and are killed on 23 February.

**1996** 31 August - After call for aid from KDP, Iraqi forces launch offensive into northern no-fly zone and capture Irbil.

**1996** 3 September - US extends northern limit of southern no-fly zone to latitude 33 degrees north, just south of Baghdad.

**1996** 12 December - Saddam Hussein's elder son, Uday, is seriously wounded in an assassination attempt in Baghdad.

**1998** 31 October - Iraq ends cooperation with UN Special Commission to Oversee the Destruction of Iraq's Weapons of Mass Destruction (Unscm).

### **Operation Desert Fox**

**1998** 16-19 December - After UN staff are evacuated from Baghdad, the US and UK launch a bombing campaign, "Operation Desert Fox", to destroy Iraq's nuclear, chemical and biological weapons programmes.

**1999** 19 February - Grand Ayatollah Sayyid Muhammad Sadiq al-Sadr, spiritual leader of the Shia community, is assassinated in Najaf.

**1999** 17 December - UNSC Resolution 1284 creates the UN Monitoring, Verification and Inspection Commission (Unmovic) to replace Unscm. Iraq rejects the resolution.

**2001** February - Britain, US carry out bombing raids to try to disable Iraq's air defence network. The bombings have little international support.

**2001** May - Saddam's son Qusay elected to the leadership of the ruling Baath Party, fuelling speculation that he's being groomed to succeed his father.

**2002** April - Baghdad suspends oil exports to protest against Israeli incursions into Palestinian territories. Despite calls by Saddam Hussein, no other Arab countries follow suit. Exports resume after 30 days.

## Weapons inspectors return

**2002** September - US President George W Bush tells sceptical world leaders at a UN General Assembly session to confront the "grave and gathering danger" of Iraq - or stand aside as the US acts. In the same month British Prime Minister Tony Blair publishes a dossier on Iraq's military capability.

**" In Iraq a dictator is building and hiding weapons that could enable him to dominate the Middle East and intimidate the civilised world - and we will not allow it "**

US President George W Bush, February 2003

**2002** November - UN weapons inspectors return to Iraq backed by a UN resolution which threatens serious consequences if Iraq is in "material breach" of its terms.

**2003** March - Chief weapons inspector Hans Blix reports that Iraq has accelerated its cooperation but says inspectors need more time to verify Iraq's compliance.

## Saddam ousted

**2003** 17 March - UK's ambassador to the UN says the diplomatic process on Iraq has ended; arms inspectors evacuate; US President George W Bush gives Saddam Hussein and his sons 48 hours to leave Iraq or face war.

**2003** 20 March - American missiles hit targets in Baghdad, marking the start of a US-led campaign to topple Saddam Hussein. In the following days US and British ground troops enter Iraq from the south.

### [BBC's Rageh Omaar on the day's drama](#)

**2003** 9 April - US forces advance into central Baghdad. Saddam Hussein's grip on the city is broken. In the following days Kurdish fighters and US forces take control of the northern cities of Kirkuk and Mosul. There is looting in Baghdad and elsewhere.

**2003** April - US lists 55 most-wanted members of former regime in the form of a deck of cards. Former deputy prime minister Tariq Aziz is taken into custody.

**2003** May - UN Security Council backs US-led administration in Iraq and lifts economic sanctions. US administrator abolishes Baath Party and institutions of former regime.

**2003** July - US-appointed Governing Council meets for first time. Commander of US forces says his troops face low-intensity guerrilla-style war. Saddam's sons Uday and Qusay killed in gun battle in Mosul.

## Insurgency intensifies

**2003** August - Deadly bomb attacks on Jordanian embassy and UN HQ in Baghdad. Saddam's cousin Ali Hassan al-Majid, or Chemical Ali, captured. Car bomb in Najaf kills 125 including Shia leader Ayatollah Mohammed Baqr al-Hakim.

**2003** 14 December - Saddam Hussein captured in Tikrit.

**2004** March - Suicide bombers attack Shia festival-goers in Karbala and Baghdad, killing 140 people.

**2004** April-May - Shia militias loyal to radical cleric Moqtada Sadr take on coalition forces.

Hundreds are reported killed in fighting during the month-long US military siege of the Sunni Muslim city of Falluja.

Photographic evidence emerges of abuse of Iraqi prisoners by US troops.

### **Sovereignty and elections**

**2004** June - US hands sovereignty to interim government headed by Prime Minister Iyad Allawi.

Saddam Hussein transferred to Iraqi legal custody.

**2004** August - Fighting in Najaf between US forces and Shia militia of radical cleric Moqtada Sadr.

**2004** November - Major US-led offensive against insurgents in Falluja.

**2005** 30 January - An estimated eight million people vote in elections for a Transitional National Assembly. The Shia United Iraqi Alliance wins a majority of assembly seats. Kurdish parties come second.

**2005** 28 February - At least 114 people are killed by a massive car bomb in Hilla, south of Baghdad, in the worst single such incident since the US-led invasion.

**2005** April - Amid escalating violence, parliament selects Kurdish leader Jalal Talabani as president. Ibrahim Jaafari, a Shia, is named as prime minister.

**2005** May onwards - Surge in car bombings, bomb explosions and shootings: Iraqi ministries put the civilian death toll for May at 672, up from 364 in April.

**2005** June - Massoud Barzani is sworn in as regional president of Iraqi Kurdistan.

**2005** August - Draft constitution is endorsed by Shia and Kurdish negotiators, but not by Sunni representatives.

More than 1,000 people are killed during a stampede at a Shia ceremony in Baghdad.

**2005** September - 182 people are killed in attacks in Baghdad.

### **Saddam on trial**

**2005** October - Saddam Hussein goes on trial on charges of crimes against humanity.

Voters approve a new constitution, which aims to create an Islamic federal democracy.

**2005** December - Iraqis vote for the first, full-term government and parliament since the US-led invasion.

**2006** January - Shia-led United Iraqi Alliance emerges as the winner of December's parliamentary elections, but fails to gain an absolute majority.

### **Sectarian violence**

**2006** February onwards - A bomb attack on an important Shia shrine in Samarra unleashes a wave of sectarian violence in which hundreds of people are killed.

**2006** 22 April - Newly re-elected President Talabani asks Shia compromise candidate Nouri al-Maliki to form a new government, ending months of deadlock.

**2006** May and June - An average of more than 100 civilians per day are killed in violence in Iraq, the UN says.

**2006** 7 June - Al-Qaeda leader in Iraq, Abu Musab al-Zarqawi, is killed in an air strike.

**2006** November - Saddam Hussein is found guilty of crimes against humanity and sentenced to death.

Iraq and Syria restore diplomatic relations after nearly a quarter century.

More than 200 die in car bombings in the mostly Shia area of Sadr City in Baghdad, in the worst attack on the capital since the US-led invasion of 2003.

**2006** December - Iraq Study Group report making recommendations to President Bush on future policy in Iraq describes the situation as grave and deteriorating.

### **Saddam executed**

**2006** 30 December - Saddam Hussein is executed by hanging.

**2007** January - US President Bush announces a new Iraq strategy; thousands more US troops will be dispatched to shore up security in Baghdad.

UN says more than 34,000 civilians were killed in violence during 2006; the figure surpasses official Iraqi estimates threefold.

**2007** February - A bomb in Baghdad's Sadriya market kills more than 130 people. It is the worst single bombing since 2003.

**2007** March - Insurgents detonate three trucks with toxic chlorine gas in Falluja and Ramadi, injuring hundreds.

**2007** April - Bombings in Baghdad kill nearly 200 people in the worst day of violence since a US-led security drive began in the capital in February.

**2007** August - The main Sunni Arab political bloc in Iraq, the Iraqi Accordance Front, withdraws from the cabinet following a dispute over power-sharing.

Truck and car bombs hit two villages of Yazidi Kurds, killing at least 250 people - the deadliest attack since 2003.

Kurdish and Shia leaders form an alliance to support Prime Minister Maliki's government but fail to bring in Sunni leaders.

### **Blackwater shootings, Turkish raids**

**2007** September - Controversy over private security contractors after Blackwater security guards allegedly fire at civilians, killing 17.

**2007** October - The number of violent civilian and military deaths continues to drop, as does the frequency of rocket attacks.

**2007** December - Turkey launches an air raid on fighters from the Kurdish PKK movement inside Iraq.

Britain hands over security of Basra province to Iraqi forces, effectively marking the end of nearly five years of British control of southern Iraq.

**2008** January - Parliament passes legislation allowing former officials from Saddam Hussein's Baath party to return to public life.

Turkish forces mount a ground offensive against Kurdish rebels in northern Iraq.

**2008** March - Unprecedented two-day visit by Iranian president, Mahmoud Ahmadinejad, to Iraq.

Prime Minister Maliki orders crackdown on militia in Basra, sparking pitched battles with Moqtada Sadr's Mehdi Army. Hundreds are killed.

**2008** July - Prime Minister Maliki for the first time raises the prospect of setting a timetable for the withdrawal of US troops as part of negotiations over a new security agreement with Washington.

The main Sunni Arab bloc, the Iraqi Accordance Front, rejoins the Shia-led government almost a year after it pulled out.

**2008** September - US forces hand over control of the western province of Anbar - once an insurgent and Al-Qaeda stronghold - to the Iraqi government. It is the first Sunni province to be returned to the Shia-led government.

Iraqi parliament passes provincial elections law. Issue of contested city of Kirkuk is set aside so elections can go ahead elsewhere.

**2008** October - Members of the Baghdad Awakening Council, estimated to number about 54,000, move to the Iraqi government payroll, with other members of the Sunni militia councils set to follow.

The US military says Al-Qaeda in Iraq's second-in-command has been killed during a raid in the northern city of Mosul.

### **Security pact approved**

**2008** November - The Iraqi parliament approves a security pact with the United States under which all US troops are due to leave the country by the end of 2011.

**2009** January - Iraq takes control of security in Baghdad's fortified Green Zone and assumes more powers over foreign troops based in the country. PM Nouri Maliki welcomes the move as Iraq's "day of sovereignty".

**2009** February - The political bloc headed by Prime Minister Nouri al-Maliki scores big wins in provincial elections.

**2009** March - US President Barack Obama announces withdrawal of most US troops by end of August 2010. Up to 50,000 of 142,000 troops now there will stay on into 2011 to advise Iraqi forces and protect US interests, leaving by end of 2011.

Commander of UK forces in southern Iraq hands over to a US general, marking the beginning of Britain's official withdrawal.

**2009** April - Parliament elects Ayad al-Samarrai of Sunni Arab Alliance as speaker, filling vacancy left when Mahmoud al-Mashhadani stepped down in December 2008. The post is reserved for Sunni Arabs by agreement among political leaders.

**2009** June - US troops withdraw from towns and cities in Iraq, six years after the invasion, having formally handed over security duties to new Iraqi forces.

### **New political groupings**

**2009** July - New opposition forces make strong gains in elections to the regional parliament of Kurdistan, but the governing KDP and PUK alliance retains a reduced majority. Masoud Barzani (KDP) is re-elected in the presidential election.

**2009** October - Prime Minister Al-Maliki announces the formation of a new political grouping of 40 parties, called the State of Law, after a split in the broad Shia United Iraqi Alliance that won the 2005 elections.

Two car bombs near the Green Zone in Baghdad kill at least 155 people, in Iraq's deadliest attack since April 2007.

**2009** December - Vice-President Tareq al-Hashemi withdraws his veto to the new election law after parliament unanimously approves an amendment to protect the rights of the Sunni Muslim and other minorities. The parliamentary election can now go ahead in February 2010.

The al-Qaeda-linked Islamic State of Iraq al-Qaeda claims responsibility for four connected suicide bombings in Baghdad that left at least 127 people dead and 400 wounded. The group also claims attacks in August and October that killed 240 people.

Story from BBC NEWS:

[http://news.bbc.co.uk/go/pr/fr/-/2/hi/middle\\_east/country\\_profiles/737483.stm](http://news.bbc.co.uk/go/pr/fr/-/2/hi/middle_east/country_profiles/737483.stm)

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